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“The mighty dead
Who blessed mankind and humanised the world.”

THE CHRISTIAN FREEMAN

AND

Record of Unitarian Worthies

BEING A HISTORY OF THE UNITARIAN REFORMATION OF RELIGION IN EUROPE AND AMERICA
DURING THE LAST THREE HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS.

With some Account of the most Notable Works written by Unitarians.

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UNITARIAN ACTIVITY.

An unusual activity and generosity has been shown among our churches during the last few years, unprecedented in our history, that more suitable, and in many cases beautiful edifices might be erected for the worship of the ONE TRUE AND LIVING GOD.

Some of the people, foolishly called the advanced thinkers of the age, prophesy that the custom of public worship is soon to pass away. Their wish is father to the thought, as they have abandoned all prayer and praise, and practically all belief in God. We have no apprehension that this blight of the fairest flower of our humanity will fall upon us. Much more has been done in late years among all Churches in repairing and beautifying their places of public worship than at any past time in the history of religion. There have been given by our own people munificent gifts; the rich and the poor have helped in this laudable work, not only to meet the claims of their own building funds, but also of others, of the same household of faith, and for new efforts in distant parts of the country.

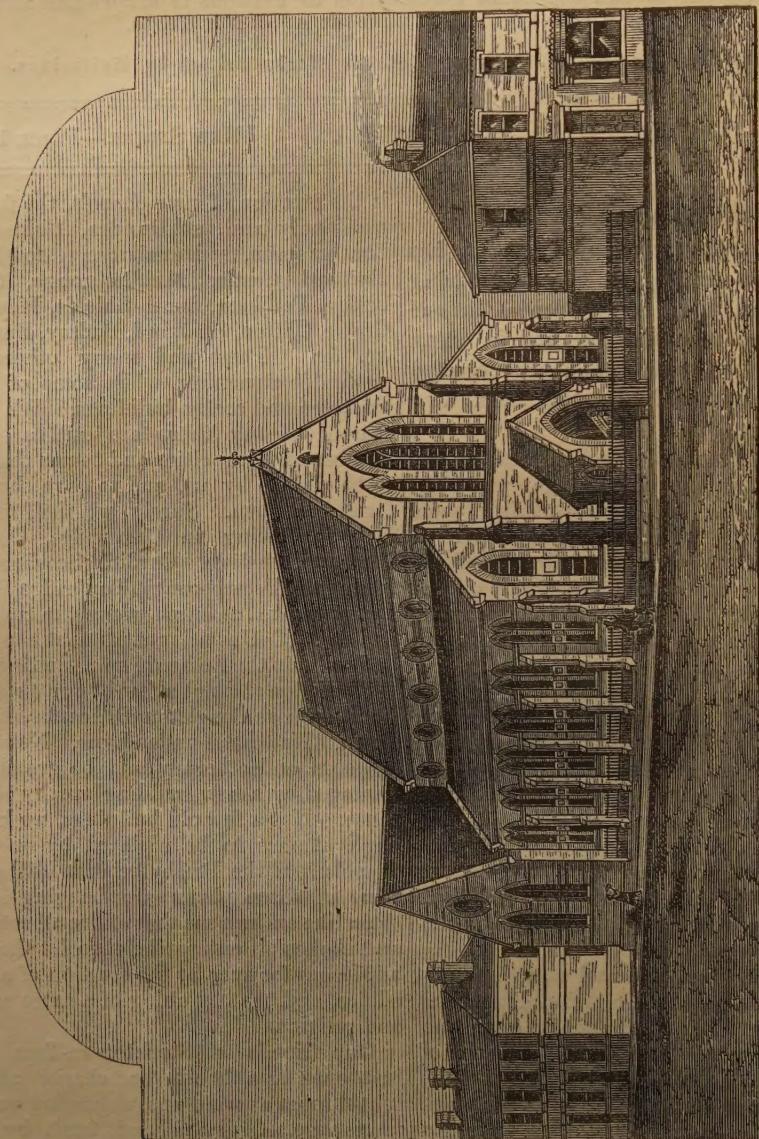
Of about three hundred church buildings belonging to the Unitarian denomination of the United Kingdom, over one hundred of these have had large sums of money spent upon them recently.

Magnificent edifices have been raised at Todmorden, Gorton, Birmingham, Glasgow, Newcastle-on-Tyne, London, &c. &c. Active steps we understand are now being taken at Nottingham, Monton, and other places, to do a similar work. Recently tens of thousands of pounds have been spent on our churches at Sheffield, Leicester, Dudley, York, &c. But the most pleasing and satisfactory record of progress lately

is the erection of new chapels, the fruit of missionary zeal, at Dundee, Birkenhead, Southampton, Dewsbury, Southport, Barnard Castle, Middlesbrough, Stalybridge, Padiham, South Shields, Hastings, Crewe, Clifton, Stratford, Pudsey, Burnley, &c. &c. These and many others are creditable structures, while some of them are large and costly buildings. We have reason to say there are still a great number of both cities and towns that are to be visited by us, and to have churches formed in them. Surely we shall not be long in having in Cambridge, Oxford, Durham, Carlisle, Cardiff, Scarborough, Ramsgate, Peterborough, Tunbridge Wells, Perth, &c. &c., a church where the reverent and free of Unitarian sentiment can meet and worship the Father in spirit and in truth.

There are also not a few of our congregations, such as Congleton, Doncaster, King's Lynn, Newcastle-under-Lyne, Newbury, Royston, and others, would be greatly advantaged by a new building worthy of our cause. Not a few old buildings, we know, ought at once to be replaced by modern chapels. If the Presbyterian traditions of some of those places are hanging about them like an incubus that stifles all activity and chokes all enterprise, then let them be wiped out for ever by the erection of a new edifice, and the beginning of a more active and religious life.

Our friends at Stockton-on-Tees have just opened a handsome chapel and a school-room as well, see engraving on the next page, designed and built by Mr. Eugene Clephan, which has cost them nearly £3000. They are now £400 in debt, and appeal to friends throughout the country to give them some help to extinguish the debt. We know them well, and worthy of assistance, and beg our readers who can help to send their gifts to the Rev. W. Elliott, of Stockton-on-Tees.



STOCKTON-ON-THE-TEES UNITARIAN CHAPEL AND SCHOOLS.

JOHN BIDDLE, THE EXILE OF SCILLY.*

BY THE LATE DR. THOMAS FOSTER BARHAM,
OF EXETER.

ALONG thy shore, thou sea-girt isle—
Where rocks and waves in ceaseless strife
Bid the white foam for ever boil,
And still ensnare the seaman's life—

Thou lone and far Kassiterid !
Whit solitary wanderer strays—
Now drooping low his pensive head,
Now straining o'er the deep his gaze ?

Say, of thy hardy sons is he—
The amphibious native of thy strand ?
Or has he crossed the stormy sea,
Au exile from his native land ?

Thy sons, still buffeting the storm,
Wear the blue livery of the deep—
The shaggy frieze, so thick and warm,
The drenching sprays aloof to keep.

His sable weeds the fashion show
Of gentler men who cities fill ;
Here less in place, where tempests blow,
And driving mists, his frame to chill.

Nor meet we here that studious mien,
That lingering gait and absent eye—
That tell of long-drawn thought within,
Of doubts profound, and musings high.

For Nature here, in sterner mood,
Lips not her darlings in repose—
Crowning light toil with plenteous food,
And scattering round the fragrant rose !

But man, her child, she straitens here,
To brace with toil his sinewy frame ;
And nerves his soul to spurn at fear,
Through danger and distress the same.

His daily bread on rolling seas,
Midst daily peri's doomed to obtain ;
Enriched by every freshening breeze
That ruffles the resentful main.

But see ! you pilgrim climbs the brow
That lifts so high its granite grey ;
He sits—he rests—he parleys now,
Or seems to par'ey with the sea.

" Ye rushing waves, all hail ! though to my
thoughts ye tell
Of battle's cursed din, sympathet' bands between,
And struggling monarchs from their empires
hurled.
But that is far away; the broad and boisterous sea
Rolls between me and England's peopled coast.

" Ah, there ! her utmost bound, with rocky ramparts crowned,
Scarce I discern, in hazy spray half lost,
Belerion'st shaggy brow, that beetles o'er
The Atlantic surges wild, that vainly round him
roar.

" No murmur of those storms shall reach
The distant, solitary wretch,
Who, these fantastic rocks among,
Rambles, and hears the sea-bird's song ;
Or listens to the fitful crash
Of waves, that ceaseless rise and dash
On adamant, their watery might
Bursting in snowy sheets of light !

" Their cool spray soothes my feverish brow,
Their voice is music to my soul ;
Hoarse melody ! I list, and list,
And yield my sense to its control.
It lulls my thoughts of grief,
Till they appear a dream ;
And seems to bring relief—
Although it does but seem.

Wrapt in this converse with the voiceful sea,
My wrongs, my woes, from memory fade and flee.

" They charged me to have erred,
And others led astray
Adown the fatal path
Of foul apostacy.

False to my God, they me belied,
And to my Lord, who for me died !
The conclave met,
The judge was set—

Man mounted on God's throne—
And they did judge a matter there
That rests with Him alone.
A brother's faith they made a crime,
And crushed thought's native right sublime.

" Paternal Power ! to thee my soul
Preferred her secret plea,
Midst slanderous tongues my conscious breast
Felt justified with thee.

" For I, from nature's harmonies,
Had caught the truth divine,
And I throughout the spirit's page
Had marked its lustre shine.

" One Father, God ! the voice was heard
From earth, and sea, and heaven ;
Nor could I quench that monishing
In hope to be forgiven.

" Son of Man ! the word of spite
Against thee, vent what malice might,
Thou saidst should pardon gain.
I could not think, though I might err,
Nor see, perchance, thy glory clear,
Thou wouldst to me be more severe—
A soul to love thee fain.

" Man doomed me to perpetual fire
Through ages without end ;
On earth in dungeons and exile
My weary days to spend ;
That brings me to this ocean isle,
Which lurking rocks defend.

" I love thee, nature, thou art kind,
Tuneful thy waters, soft thy wind—
Earth for her children feels ;
Thy rocks are adamant, but they
Will sooner yield to pity's sway
Than stony hearts of bigot's blind,
Which superstition steels."

* John Biddle was exiled to the Scilly Isles for his belief in the doctrine of "One God the Father."

† The Land's End.

Thus 'plain'd the pilgrim to the surge's roar,
Then turned him homeward on the sea-beat shore.

WAYSIDE GATHERINGS.

NOBILITY.—The essence of true nobility is neglect of self. Let the thought of self pass in and the beauty of a great action is gone, like the bloom from a soiled flower.—*Froude.*

TOTAL DEPRAVITY.—None are *totally* depraved—none wholly evil. My sainted mother was always, to my mind, an unanswerable reply to every satire upon human nature.—*Jas. Shrigley.*

BUDDHISM.—Of the talk about the high character of Buddhism, even as compared with Christianity, Wendell Phillips pitifully says:—To all this the answer is—*India, past and present.* The Asiatic civilisation has failed from no lack of intellectual vigour or development. The force wanting was a spiritual one. Body and brain, without soul, Asia rotted away. From Confucius to Cicero there is light enough; no heat.

LIBERAL IDEAS AND CORRECTION.—When I hear of liberal ideas I always wonder how men can be contented with empty sounds. An idea cannot be liberal; it may be powerful, good, conclusive in itself, fulfilling thus the godlike mission of productivity. Still less can a conception be liberal; it has a very different purpose. Liberality must be sought in the disposition, which is the living mind. Dispositions are seldom liberal, because they proceed directly from the person, his closest relations and needs.—*Goethe.*

PROVIDENCES.—People talk about special providences. I believe in the providences, but not in the speciality. I do not believe that God lets the thread of my affairs go for six days, and on the seventh evening takes it up for a moment. The so-called special providences are no exception to the rule—they are common to all men at all moments. But it is a fact that God's care is more in some instances of it than in others to the dim and often bewildered vision of humanity. Upon such instances men seize and call them providences. It is well that they can; but it would be gloriously better if they could believe that the whole matter is one grand providence.—*George MacDonald.*

A REMARKABLE PROPHETY.—The following, which is known as "Mother Shipton's Prophecy," was first published in 1641. It will be noticed that all the events predicted in it, except that mentioned in the last two lines, which is still in the future, have already come to pass:—

Carriages without horses shall go
And accidents fill the world with woe.
Around the world thoughts shall fly
In the twinkling of an eye.
Water shall more wonders do,
Now strange, yet shall be true.
The world upside down shall be,
And gold be found at roots of trees.
Through hills man shall ride,
And no horse or ass be at his side.
Under water men shall walk,
Shall ride, shall sleep, shall talk.
In the air men shall be seen
In white, in black, in green.
Iron in the water shall float
As easy as a wooden boat.
Gold shall be found, and found
In a land that's not now known.
Fire and water shall wonders do.
England shall at last admit a Jew.
The world to an end shall come
In eighteen hundred and eighty-one.

THE ORTHODOX IDEA.—Superintendent of the Sunday School: "Here is another of these books spoilt! Ink has been spilt over it, and the pictures torn out! I must find who does it!" A boy held out his arm. "What! do you know who did it?" "Yes, sir! Jesus did it." "How dare you say such a thing?" demanded the superintendent. "Please, sir, my teacher says we must lay all our sins upon Jesus."

THE BIBLE.—I know there is that in the Scriptures that has the grit to it. I know there is a book which has gone through tempestuous ages, assailed, buffeted, cast hither and thither, and yet has retained the confidence of mankind, because it has in it which masters sorrow, takes hold of trouble, gives strength where there is weakness, and supplies an anchor to those who are tempest-tossed. There is that in the Word of God which supports the poor and the ignorant, taking hold of the fundamental wants of human nature with a power which no other literature and no other thing ever did.

"ONLY A COBBLER."—Dr. Carey, while at dinner one day with the Governor-General of India, heard an officer ask if Dr. Carey had not at one time been a shoemaker. "No, sir," replied Carey; "only a cobbler." That was a brave reply. Few men who rise from small beginnings to prosperity have either sense or courage enough to glory in their early poverty. I have known boys to be ashamed of their business because it was humble. Foolish shame! I would rather be an honest cobbler than a dishonest merchant. Nay, I would rather be an honest rag-picker than a wicked king. It is the character, not the business, that makes the noble boy, or noble man.

IS CHRISTIANITY OUTGROWN?—Mrs. Stowe says some good things in her "Oldtown Folks." For instance:—The hardest doctrines are the things that a fellow sees with his own eyes going on in the world around him. If you had been in England, as I have, where the true Church prevails, you'd see that pretty much of the lower classes there are predestined to be conceived and born in sin, and shapen in iniquity; and come into the world in such circumstances that to expect even decent morality of them is expecting what is contrary to all reason. This is your Christian country, after eighteen hundred years' experiment of Christianity. * * * Then, as for heathen countries, they are a peg below those of Christianity. Taking the mass of human beings in the world at this hour, they are in such circumstances that, so far from its being reasonable to expect the morals of Christianity of them, they are not within sight of ordinary human decencies. Talk of purity of heart to a Malay or Hottentot! Why, the doctrine of a clean shirt is an uncomprehended mystery to more than half the human race at this moment.

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